



# El Clarin

ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey

VOLUME 11, NO. 2

SUMMER 1991

## AWARDS NIGHT: A Special Ceremony and a Commitment to High Moral Values

The ASPIRA Awards Night Ceremony took place at the Princeton University Third World Center on June 7th. The keynote speaker was Hon. Carmen Garcia, Municipal Court Judge of the City of Trenton.

ASPIRA traditionally holds its Awards Night Ceremony at the end of each academic year to honor students who have achieved academic excellence, and demonstrated leadership and a commitment to their community. The evening culminates with the special ceremony of "El Areyto," in which ASPIRA student leaders are initiated.

The "Areyto" name comes from a Taino Indian ceremony where tribal leaders sang of the great deeds of their heroes. During the ceremony, students promise to uphold the values of ASPIRA, no matter what hard work and sacrifices it will require of them, by affirming the "Areyto" oath.

The oath is taken by candle light, with the Aspirante of the Year leading and the rest of the group repeating. It is a very emotional and fraternal experience for these youngsters. For many, it is the first time they receive such honor and recognition for academic achievement and

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ASPIRA Dance Troupe performs at the Newark Puerto Rican Day Parade in July.

## ASPIRA Presents at the 1st Conference On Nonprofit Cost-Effectiveness

Our Executive Director, Hilda Rosario, was invited to be a panelist at the "Cost-Effectiveness in the Nonprofit Sector Conference" sponsored by Technoserve, Inc. at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California.

The goal of the conference was to examine different perspectives on cost-effectiveness evaluation in the nonprofit sector, including: pros and cons, donor and nonprofit viewpoints, domestic and international experiences.

ASPIRA of New Jersey was invited to present because it is one of the largest Hispanic youth services agency in the U.S. that is concerned about the cost-effectiveness of its programs. Other nonprofits participating in the conference included The Nature Conservancy, The Support Centers of America, Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the National Gallery of Art.

The Chronicle of Philanthropy ran a full page article on the event in its July '91 issue. Guess whose picture was shown? (See page 3.)

## Youth Service America Honors ASPIRANTE Agustin Javier Cruz

Youth Service America is an advocacy and technical support organization for 3,500 programs involving young people and community service throughout the country. It was founded in 1986 and its projects include the Working Group on Youth Service Policy, the Youth Volunteer Corps of America and the National Youth Service Day among others.

Agustin Javier Cruz of Jersey City is one of 26 young leaders named to Youth Service America's national Youth Action Council. After a national search for young leaders involved in national and community service, he was selected as one of the outstanding young people in the field. Gus, as we all know him, is currently a senior at James J. Ferris High School and he definitely does not lack energy or enthusiasm!

He has been actively involved in the ASPIRA Public Leadership Program since his freshman year. Last year he was the President of the ASPIRA Club at Ferris. In the summer of 1990, he helped organize the Teen Institute of the Garden State. This summer he attended the Governor's School on Public Issues and the Future of New Jersey. He currently serves on the New Jersey ASPIRA Board of Directors, and attends the ASPIRA Association Board in Washington.

All of us at ASPIRA are confident that Gus will have a bright future ahead of him. We are proud of his achievements, and hope that other Aspirantes will follow in his footsteps.





## Message from the Executive Director and the Chairperson

Since its inception thirty years ago, ASPIRA has included in its goals parent awareness of educational programs and policies that affect their children.

Current research indicates that parent involvement is key to increasing student achievement. ASPIRA knew this long before these results were published. This is why we have made

parent involvement a main component of our programs.

At a recent activity in the Newark Northward Center, four young people received scholarships to study at Montclair State College. All four students thanked their parents for being there when they needed them. Their parents' support was key to their educational success.

This past year, ASPIRA successfully implemented workshops to help parents become aware of their rights in the education of their children. ASPIRA volunteers helped parents with their income tax forms. In addition, counselors visited parents at home to follow-up on issues of concern.

Our parents do care about their children's education. Unfortunately, there are times when school personnel do not help parents feel comfortable when they visit the school. As a result, parents find it very difficult to return. To make matters worse, sometimes parents cannot communicate with school personnel due to language barriers.

Schools can benefit from parent involvement. Parents can serve as tutors, and volunteer with after school activities. Working together as a team, parents and school personnel can make a difference.

At its annual summer retreat, the ASPIRA Board of Directors reaffirmed its commitment to continue to work with parents. We look forward to a fruitful and successful year. More so, we look forward to expanding our service, to students and their parents.

## The ASPIRA Movement: 30 Years of Helping Young People

It all began in 1961, in New York City, when a group of Hispanic educators saw the need to alleviate the alarming dropout rate among Puerto Ricans in the state.

Under the leadership of Dr. Antonia Pantoja, ASPIRA was formed to encourage and promote education and leadership development among Latino youth. It was patterned after her belief that the development of people, singularly or in groups, must be done holistically. Initially a project under the Puerto Rican-Hispanic Forum, ASPIRA became its own organization by 1965.

Today ASPIRA organizations, known as Associates, exist in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Florida and Connecticut. All of these Associates form the ASPIRA Association which is based in Washington, D.C. ASPIRA of Connecticut is the "youngest" member of the group having recently been incorpo-

rated a few months ago.

Although each ASPIRA is financially independent, and each has its own Board of Directors, the National Office in Washington provides support to each of the members. The National Director is Dr. Janice Perrowich and the National Board is made up of representatives from each of the Associates.

This year we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the ASPIRA movement. ASPIRA of New Jersey became a proud member of this movement in 1968.

## Did You Know That This Year the Puerto Rican Flag Celebrated Its 100th Birthday?



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**Awards Night** (Continued from page 1)  
leadership. For those who are seniors, it is their last ASPIRA activity before heading to college or work.

At the end of the ceremony, the students blow out their candles, yell out cheers and applaud. Some hug and some cry. And, they all beam with pride!

The recipient of the Aspirante of the Year Award was Olga Montero. Olga also received a scholarship from the Northward Center. She will be going to Montclair State College. Carlos Fuentes won the Peirre Scholarship.

Our congratulations to both on a job well done!

## "EL AREYTO"

"I do solemnly affirm that I will uphold the ideals of ASPIRA which are:

peace within humanity,  
the defense of rights and  
prerogatives of the culture  
for the benefits of all,  
the motivation of studies and efforts,  
dedication to the task of stimulating  
within myself and others  
excellence in the fields of  
sciences, arts and professions,  
for the services of our community  
in New Jersey and wherever  
we may find ourselves.

I close these words with the joy  
and lucidity of this light  
which symbolically represents for me  
the joy and clarity of intelligence.

As I blow out my candle,

I incorporate to my spirit  
the light of this flame  
which will burn in my heart, forever,  
and will never die,  
as long as I live,  
flame of knowledge  
that I will use wisely  
with dignity and authority."

speaker: "Do you accept this oath?"

Aspirantes: "Yes, we accept it!"

(blow out your candles)

## September Jazz Festival with Dave Valentin

This Fall ASPIRA will host its first Jazz Festival on September 29 at the John Harris Center for the Arts in Englewood, New Jersey. The event will feature some of Latin Jazz greatest's like Dave Valentin, Hilton Ruiz, Chico Mendoza and His Latin Jazz Ensemble, and Daniel Ponce. Proceeds from the event will go towards ASPIRA's counseling and leadership development programs. For more information call (201) 484-7554.



## We Have A New Leader

Margaret Rosario-Rivera first heard about ASPIRA from her college mentor, Dr. Hilda Hidalgo, a founder of ASPIRA of New Jersey. Margie knew this was the best organization to reach out to Latino students. So when she was Admissions Counselor at Rutgers, she and others arranged to conduct student interviews at our Paterson Center. It was, as Margie explained it, not just a job but a real commitment for her, Rutgers' Hispanic educators and the University administration. Due to her initial efforts, Rutgers has since been very active in the recruitment of Latino students.

Margie left Rutgers in 1984 to join Bellcore as Associate Manager of University Relations, in the human resources organization.

In 1986, ASPIRA asked Margie to obtain Bellcore's sponsorship of a Math and Science Conference at NJIT. Since then Bellcore has been a supporter of ASPIRA. As with Rutgers, Margie was a catalyst, initiating a strong relationship between ASPIRA and Bellcore. Bellcore

employees have served as role models for students and many volunteered as workshop leaders at our conferences.

Throughout this period, Margie's involvement with ASPIRA grew. Finally, in 1987, she was asked to join the Board. During her five year tenure she has served as Chair of the Development Committee and Treasurer. In July, she was elected Chairperson.

Margie wants ASPIRA to be as efficient and self-sufficient as possible. "We are at a pivotal point. We need to evaluate where we have been, and head for new directions while keeping our mission in sight," she says. "The Board is with me on this. We would like to expand ASPIRA's services to Latino communities in the state where we currently do not operate. Our commitment is to provide youngsters with real opportunities to make it."

Margie believes that ASPIRA's real challenge is to raise the funds to make this expansion possible. In regards to the tough economic environment she says, "ASPIRA will weather the storm. We are a 'lean and mean' organization with a highly capable staff, a committed Board of Directors and plenty of friends who support us."

In addition to her work with ASPIRA, Margie's track record shows a real interest in education and minority issues in the state. In 1988 she was appointed by Governor Kean to the New Jersey Commission on the Status of Women. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees of Montclair State College (a Florio appointment). In 1987, she received the Tribute to Women in Industry Award. And in 1990, she received the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineer's Award for promoting affirmative action issues. When asked how she finds time in her schedule to be so involved she smiles and replies, "I have an understanding husband, and I work for a company that believes in community involvement." ASPIRA is glad to have her as our leader!

## ASPIRA UPCOMING EVENTS

### ASPIRA Latin Jazz Festival featuring Dave Valentin

Sunday, September 29  
The John Harris Center for the Arts, Englewood, NJ  
For more information contact:  
Itala Mansilla (201) 484-7554

### Student Leadership Retreat

October 18th thru the 20th  
Princeton Education Center at  
Blairstown, NJ  
For more information contact:  
Roberto Del Rios (201) 484-7554

### Cultural Awareness Conference

November (date to be announced)  
Rider College, Lawrenceville, NJ  
For more information contact:  
Wanda De Jesus (609) 392-1144

### ASPIRA Workshop for Parents

Saturday, November 16  
ASPIRA Essex County Center  
390 Broad Street, Newark  
For more information contact:  
Carmelo Figueroa (201) 484-7554

### Careers Day Conference

Wednesday, December 4  
William Paterson College  
For more information contact:  
Phillip Martinez (201) 279-3110

## ASPIRA congratulates

the newly formed ASPIRA of Connecticut, chaired by Dr. Sara Melendez, Vice Provost of the University of Bridgeport.

Dr. Olga Jimenez Wagenheim for receiving a Fulbright Fellowship to teach doctoral level 20th Century Puerto Rican History at the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina. Dr. Wagenheim is an Associate Professor of History at Rutgers, and has served on the ASPIRA Board of Directors.

## Non-Profits Urged to Use More Rigor in Measuring Cost-Effectiveness of Activities

By JENNIFER MOORE

PALO ALTO, CAL.

Non-profit organizations need to become more sophisticated and rigorous in determining whether they are getting good enough results for the money they spend, said charity leaders and grant makers at a conference here.

Very few non-profits have developed techniques for conducting "cost-effectiveness" studies, however, so there are few models for organizations that want to do so. What's more, many charity leaders question whether such studies are appropriate for their organizations.



having a clear and precise mission statement. They say the statement should be used to help determine how much value should be assigned to the various benefits derived from a program and to rank them in terms of their importance.

TechnoServe, for example, measures its cost-effectiveness with a formula that divides benefits by the project's cost. It includes both quantifiable results, such as the per far revenue of businesses it starts, and non-quantifiable ones, such as social benefits of a venture. The organization has developed a system for assigning a weighted

adding a child-care service or job-training program would be a good use of its dollars.

Measuring long-term results can be especially difficult for human services groups. Hilda Rosario, executive director of ASPIRA, a New Jersey group that provides counseling and leadership training for Hispanic youths who are having problems in school, said the organization had only recently tried to get in touch with former participants. She has had trouble becoming a great majority of the students' families have moved.

"We are a very traditional com-

## Statewide Youth Conference at Rutgers University

Approximately 225 students attended ASPIRA's 6th Annual Statewide Youth Conference held at the Rutgers University Student Center on April 22nd. The theme of the event "Young Latinos Realizing Today's Problems for a Better Tomorrow," inspired those present to take a proactive approach in their everyday lives.

Many of those who were there knew the keynote speaker, Maria Vizcarondo-De Soto, ASPIRA's former Executive Director. Ms. De Soto is now the Director of the Office of Hispanic Affairs for the State of New Jersey.

Every year, students from the ASPIRA Public Policy Leadership Program (7th grade through high school) research the topics that will be discussed at the conference, and make the presentations. The topics included: the Quality Education Act (QEA), Equal Employment Opportunity Programs (EEO), the environment, and war. After the presentations, workshops on each of these issues were offered to the students.

## ASPIRA Participates in Puerto Rican Day Parades Throughout the State

Every year ASPIRA has taken part in the large Puerto Rican Day Parade in Newark. However, since last year's entry of the "Fiestas de Loiza Aldea," ASPIRA's participation has been in great demand.

For the first time ever we were invited to participate in Irvington's Hispanic American Parade last May. Following this, we participated in the Newark Puerto Rican Day Parade, which took place in July, and the Trenton Puerto Rican Day Parade which took place in August. In both parades, the ASPIRA Dance Troupe performed folkloric dances dressed in colorful costumes.

The crowd at the Newark parade was estimated at 60,000. The theme - "Our Children's Education is Our Hope for a Better Future" - promoted ASPIRA's own mission of "Leadership Through Education."

## ASPIRA Is Honored by the Trenton Puerto Rican Community

The Trenton Puerto Rican Day Parade Committee honored ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey at its annual banquet last August. The Committee's President, Nelson Gonzalez, emphasized the importance of culture and sports in the development of our youngsters. Roberto Clemente's photograph on the cover of the banquet journal signified Puerto Rico's strongest role model in the sports world. By honoring ASPIRA, the Trenton community showed its support for our programs.

ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey is a nonprofit organization providing counseling and leadership development programs to Latino and other minority youth. Our programs include personal and educational counseling, dropout prevention, leadership development and post-secondary placement.

EL CLARIN is an ASPIRA publication, designed to inform the community of our programs and other issues of importance. For more information on ASPIRA or to receive EL CLARIN you can write or call our executive office:

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